

YOUR 31st DISTRICT LEGISLATIVE TEAM

Sen. Pam Roach

Rep. Dan Roach

Rep. Jan Shabro

Elections — *Ensuring a free, fair and accurate system*

All political power is inherent in the people, and governments derive their just power from the consent of the governed, and are established to protect and maintain individual rights.

— Article 1, Section 1, Washington State Constitution

Standing Up For Washington Voters

Washington state has had long-standing problems with its election system. And, with the recent 5-4 decision by the state Supreme Court to restrict the people’s access to the referendum process, voters are now separated even more from the process.

We stand firm in fighting to put integrity in our election process. While the 2005 Legislature addressed the “simple” problems of our system, vital aspects of security were purposely left unaddressed (*please see following section*).

As your legislative delegation, we will continue to work toward the best methods possible to ensure honest elec-

tions. What may be even harder to address, however, is the judicial attack on the people’s right to referendum.

The state constitution clearly states, “The second power reserved by the people is the referendum, and it may be ordered on any act, bill, law, or any part thereof passed by the Legislature...” And yet, by a majority vote, the state Supreme Court cut short that right by ruling that an emergency clause (which enacts legislation immediately) on any piece of legislation is constitutional. This circumvents our right to take action against any bill the Legislature deems an “emergency.”

More election reforms needed

Although some changes were made during the 2005 legislative session, this Legislature refused to do what needs to be done to ensure an honest, accurate and fair election system. We are continuing to work for the following reforms:

- Clean up voter rolls by requiring all persons to re-register to vote.
- Ensure voters are citizens of the United States and creating a felony crime for those who falsely mark their ballots if they are not a U.S. citizen.
- Require absentee ballots to reach the county auditor by election day.
- Require clear, concise instructions for our military and overseas voters and see to it that they receive their ballots on time.
- Require the Secretary of State to conduct random investigations of voter records to remove unqualified voters.
- Eliminate voter fraud by requiring photo ID and proof of voter registration at the polls.
- Encourage high schools to teach about the voting process.
- Out-of-country military voters should have greater access to voting.

Washington’s primary election — Preserving your right to choose

In 2003, federal judges struck down Washington’s “blanket” primary, which had allowed people to vote for their preferred candidate regardless of party. The court agreed with the major parties that this method violated the First Amendment right of association.

To replace the blanket system, the state adopted a so-called “Montana” primary, favored by the parties, which required voters to choose one party’s ballot before voting. It was used for the first time in September 2004, prompting numerous voter complaints.

The top-two primary, approved by Initiative 872, again allowed primary voters to pick candidates from any party

but permitted only the top two vote-getters, regardless of party to move on to the general election.

The state Republican and Democrat parties argued that system, too, was unconstitutional. Recently, a federal judge agreed, reinstating the Montana primary — at least for this year.

In the meantime, the state is appealing the judge’s decision, but our Secretary of State said he will move forward with the Montana primary until this issue is resolved.

The voters have spoken through their support of Initiative 872 — the top-two primary. That decision should be respected and we believe our right to choose must be preserved.

## YOUR 31st DISTRICT LEGISLATIVE TEAM

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## Education — *The paramount duty of the state*

Ensuring that every child in Washington is given the opportunity to succeed is perhaps the most important task faced by the Legislature. We are working toward this success by supporting and adopting policies that will provide our children the best possible education.

*“Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom.”*

— George Washington Carver, 1864 - 1943

## We must prepare all Washington students for the diverse world and economy that awaits them.

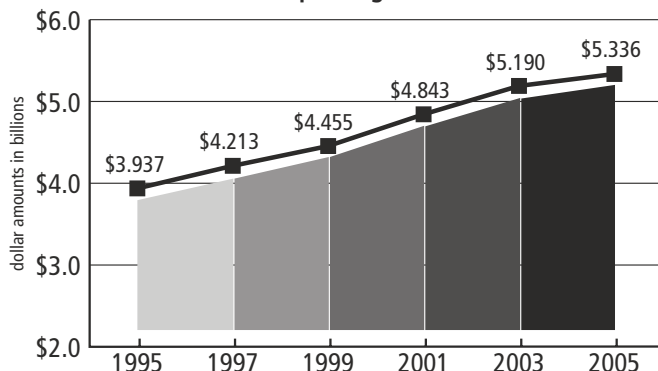
As your legislators, we believe very few issues are as critical as ensuring that Washington's students are prepared to enter the diverse world that awaits them after high school — whether that means higher education or the workforce. The key to a strong economy and healthy families begins with a world class education.

We recognize our world is changing and students need innovative academic settings. This session we supported legislation that was passed into law to help bring digital learning opportunities to all students (SSB 5828). We also believe in the importance of traditional standardized testing and opposed the recent bill eliminating it. We need to know how our students rank among their peers in other states.

## We need to allow for local control of schools that are performing well, and expect more accountability from those that are not.

- We shouldn't be telling teachers how to teach from Olympia, including mandating specific sex education programs.
- We need to better involve parents so they have the tools necessary to educate their children.
- Taxpayers have a right to know whether their tax dollars are spent wisely and that the results they were promised are being achieved.
- It's unacceptable that more than one in five students drop out before graduating from high school.

**Public School Funding**  
— Annual State Spending from 1995 to 2005



## 2005 Legislative Achievements for Education

Your legislative team supported the following to improve education:

- The Legislature reinstated Initiative 732, which guarantees annual cost-of-living raises for all public school employees. Teachers will get a 1.2 percent raise this year and a 1.7 percent raise for the 2005-06 school year.
- The Legislature also restored Initiative 728, which provides an additional \$138 million to reduce class sizes in the next biennium.
- At the last minute we restored \$1.7 million for the Washington Reading Corps, which will help children learn to read at an early age; funding had been eliminated by Senate and House budget writers.
- Nearly \$25 million was provided for the Learning Assistance Program for struggling students. The program

will focus on high school students, helping them to meet tough new graduation requirements.

- Drop-out rate reduction goals will be established along with an evaluation of drop-out prevention programs.
- College enrollment at state four-year universities will rise by 4,185 for a total of 94,260 by the 2006-07 school year — almost a 5 percent increase in one year alone.
- Creation of a commission to ensure educational opportunities for children with autism.

*It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders, without distinction or preference on account of race, color, caste or sex.*

— Article IX, Section 1, Washington State Constitution